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The Lesson

WHAT hit us? Was it bacon, and "basic," plus nation-wide irritation at our present discontents, inevitable though they be? We think all these factors played a part, and probably a large part, in the disturbing swing to the Right we saw at the local elections.

Add to all that a good deal of clever, if not very scrupulous, Tory propaganda, and we get a pretty formidable list. But it would be unwise to assume that that was the full story.

The lesson of these local elections, from our standpoint, is largely one of organisation. The Tories, fighting harder and more effectively than they have done for over a decade, got their voters out to the poll in record numbers. We did not, although in most contests the Labour vote went up as compared with 1946.

How can we get the "sleeping" Labour voters to the poll next time? That must be the task to which we should all set ourselves. It is dangerous to assume, as some folk do, that "the Tories will never get such a vote out again."

We must fight and organise and campaign on the assumption that the opposition can pull out another vote of similar weight—but that we can go one better still. Any other attitude would be fatal.

What can we do? The first essential is that local parties should search for weaknesses in their electoral organisation—and remedy them. Were there enough workers out on The Day? Was canvassing thoroughly done? Do we keep in close contact with the people throughout the year, and not only at election times? Was our propaganda sufficiently persuasive? We believe that local parties by reviewing their campaigns in this fashion can put their fingers on many weak spots.

One last word. Amidst the encircling defeats on November 1, we saw that places like Sheffield and East Ham (as described in this issue) were registering encouraging gains. The Labour voters are there if we can bring them to the poll. Let us use all our resources of skill, enthusiasm and persuasion to see that we do.

As we go to press, the great news from Gravesend comes to hand.

Why East Ham Won

By **ARTHUR MADDISON**, Secretary-Agent, East Ham South L.P.

East Ham achieved the remarkable result of winning all wards and capturing three Tory seats on November 1st. Here is how a very fine campaign was organised. Another article shows how Sheffield's victories were organised.

The success of the East Ham Labour Party in the November Elections entitles me, I think, to draw one or two conclusions from the campaign we pursued.

We fought all ten wards, won them all and captured three Tory seats. The East Ham County Borough Council now consists of thirty-nine Labour members and one lonely Conservative. With West Ham we have the biggest majority in the country.

In the first place the campaign was conducted on lines similar to a General Election. Every Party member was imbued with the feeling that the local elections were just as vital as a Parliamentary Election and that the same method and enthusiasm was required. This was, I know, not so in some other areas.

Local Paper Helped

Secondly, knowing the weakness of the Government to be in the sphere of public relations, we had decided long ago to overcome the problem locally. No election is won on polling day—it is what has happened in the preceding twelve months. The issue of a monthly "Citizen" on a mass door to door basis keeps people in touch with local affairs. The "Citizen" is drawn up professionally and consists of short pithy and readable news items and *does not* consist of long wearisome articles by people who cannot write. People in East Ham know what is happening locally and they know that the crisis is not of Labour's making.

But basically, Ward organisation is the key. In East Ham the wards have not merely mass memberships on paper, but do have lively and large Ward meetings with regular reports from the Councillors and Aldermen and where self-criticism is the one quality most appreciated. All complaints are looked at right away and an answer given. Every Ward holds its Saturday night Social, runs its own coach outings to the Theatres, and really reaches the people in their own homes. Residents are made to feel that the Labour Party is theirs and is not something separate from them, but is an expression of their will. This feeling transcends all petty

grievances and prevents the exploitation of popular discontent by either the Communists or the Tories. We have our own Sports Section which caters for everybody.

At Election times we are thus able to fall back on deep reserves of faith and loyalty.

Final Call-Up

On November 1st we had the feeling that a portion of the normal Labour supporters were not turning out and that the national position was against us. I had observed that window cards were not shown so enthusiastically as in previous years. As the day proceeded my Ward Agents sent out their teams of workers to "knock them up" according to the marked Register. These Ward Agents knew who had voted and who had not as the day went on. It is my belief that this final call-up won us the day. In all the back streets we fetched out the Labour supporters.

This personal call broke down the feeling of reticence. But it can only be done effectively if the Ward Agent uses his poll card returns and his marked Register efficiently, and there has been an intelligent canvass during the preceding three weeks. Moreover, it can only be done if people know that the Labour Party has not suddenly sprung upon them on Election day, but has been active throughout the year.

Everyone in East Ham knows of the Panel of Councillors—every Friday evening at the Labour Hall, electors may consult a public representative on personal problems.

There is also a Legal advice service very widely used and of great help to the Party. Any citizen may see the Agent in both Divisions at any time and hundreds of personal problems have been solved. Sympathy is the keynote. To tell people harshly that "nothing can be done" weakens their faith in democracy.

Finally in East Ham, the whole Labour, Trade Union and Co-operative movements are deeply integrated. The Communists have no foothold and Labour is the Party of the People.

How Sheffield Did It

By Councillor JOHN S. WORRALL

Secretary and Whip of Sheffield City Council Labour Group

The Sheffield Labour Party's successful election campaign was undoubtedly the result of the concentrated effort and close co-operation effected by the Party group on the City Council. Their success lay not merely in an intensive drive immediately preceding the poll, important though this was, but rather in their ability at all times to give the woman in the home and the man in industry, a clear and concise account of the Party's past achievements, their current activities and their future ambitions.

The success at the recent elections can also be attributed to the unswerving loyalty and discipline on the floor of the City Council during the last 20 years, and when such loyalty is maintained the elections can be faced with confidence and assurance.

They had a story to tell of their city, and they told it simply, devoid of any suggestion of political intrigue. It was a story of facts, a story of 20 years' of Labour achievements. Their press and publicity, backed by the Trades and Labour Council, was small but efficient, publicity which must necessarily at all times be vigilant to counteract the opposition, who had at their disposal a far bigger propaganda medium in the shape of the city's newspaper.

Leaflets and News Letter

Their publicity committee, backed and assisted by the Brightside and Carbrook Co-operative Society, Ltd., issued periodic leaflets which reached

the man in industry through the medium of the shop stewards (A.F.U. played a very important and prominent part) and also reached the housewife by door to door distribution. Such leaflets were the link between the Party's policy and the Government's.

Their attitude to the Government's national emergencies and difficulties was not one of evasion, but rather one of intentional encounter in which they shared these difficulties and explained their significance to the people. A monthly news letter was issued to all organisations connected with the movement, ensuring that they were in possession of the Group's current activities in addition to the Government's administrations.

The actual election campaign was necessarily intensive. The Group's team work and co-operation with the candidates enabled speakers to be in full possession of the facts, facts which they knew were necessary to supply relevant and non-evasive answers to the citizen. Queries and questions were met with facts and figures; answers were simple, to the point, and, above all, sincere. *The Movement had reached out into the homes of the people, laid before them a policy, explained it, answered all questions appertaining to it, and then urged them as citizens to exercise their vote and ensure that this policy was brought into practice.*

The result of the Movement's efficient organisation was clearly indicated at the poll on November 1st, when the Sheffield Labour Party returned a gain of four seats.

New Appointments

Mr. J. H. Nash, who has been agent in the King's Norton Division of Birmingham, is taking over the secretaryship of Birmingham Borough Labour Party. Aged 46, Mr. Nash has been a Party member for 25 years and has held every office in his D.L.P. except that of treasurer. He started working as a part-time agent in King's Norton seven years ago and was agent for Capt. Raymond Blackburn in the 1945 General Election.

Mr. A. S. J. Stevens, who is 29, has been appointed agent in Dulwich. An

active Party member for 12 years, he has held a number of offices in Bexhill Labour Party. During the 1945 General Election he was agent for Rye. A telephonist by occupation, Mr. Stevens has been a member of his trade union for ten years.

Mrs. V. S. E. Pearce, who has been part-time agent in East Norfolk, now becomes full-time organiser. During the time she has been in this rural constituency she has succeeded in building up a powerful Labour organisation.

Crofters' Crusade

By W. G. MARSHALL, Assistant Scottish Organiser

Caithness and Sutherland made news recently with its on-and-off-again by-election. Here is the story of how its fast-growing constituency Party is being built up by the self-sacrificing efforts of a grand team of enthusiasts, including many crofters.

Have you ever been to Caithness and Sutherland? Have you penetrated the Scottish Highlands and found the people and the country lying beyond?

Caithness is not Highland. Caithness is a county of flat, brown plains, torn in the north by the unceasing power of the swift waters of the Pentland Firth, guarded by the mountains in the west and in the east the North Sea, with a people whose history and character require a fitter pen than mine to describe.

Fishermen and crofters, farmers, farmworkers and railwaymen, the lad and lass o' pairs now teaching in the tiny village schools, the bus drivers and bus lassies, shopkeepers, the village cobblers who claim to be the real knights of St. Crispin, and the proverbial butcher, baker and candlestick-maker join to form this part of the constituency's Labour Party.

He Biked 60 Miles

Sutherland, of granite mountains and towering dolomites, of turbulent rivers and placid Highland Lochs, its 20,000 acre sheep farms, its hardy crofters and fishermen, gamekeepers and shepherds scattered along the lochsides and fiords of the north and west. Sutherland, with its Highland ferries, its straths, its incredibly narrow roads and its coal mine at Brora.

Here in this constituency, the Labour Party, reforming in Wick after the war, faces the problem of organising the forces of Labour under the severe handicaps of distance, inaccessibility and scattered population.

Notice, you readers of the South, members of the Labour Party travel by pushbike, car, the daily bus and on foot, to local Labour Party meetings. Meetings held often many miles from some of the members' homes. On arrival they sit down to discuss and prepare the task of taking the message of Socialism into the clachans, the biggins and villages.

One crofter comrade has travelled 60 miles to the meeting by pushbike. He

must face the same distance of a return journey. He tells of his work for the Party, of delivering pamphlets by hand to remote crofters and of the rural postmen like Mercury, carrying messages to comrades in distant homesteads. With evangelical fervour he describes the burning faith of the crofter and fisherman convinced of the need for Socialism for the countryside.

New Kind of Clearances

Cynical Southerners regard these people as living in the backward political areas. Remember, however, that these people have not the varied distractions of the townsmen. Dark evenings are often spent in study, and in discussing problems with the folk you find a very high standard of political awareness, especially among the crofter fishermen.

In the historic trials and tribulations of the Russian peasant, the crofter sees his counterpart in history. His knowledge of the Highland Clearances, handed down from father to son, the crushing hardships endured under indifferent Tory Governments, and the exploitation of the landowners are to him akin to the worst tyrannies of the Tsars.

Caithness and Sutherland Labour Party aim at beginning the Highland clearances over again, but this time it will be the clearance from power of the feudal remnants of an outworn and decadent régime. The haunting ruins of crofters' homes, burnt and pillaged in the Clearances, are monuments in every glen which remind the people of this constituency of the road which their ancestors have travelled, and are an inspiration to raise the fiery cross once more to end forever the domination of the landlords.

Did you know that John O'Groats had a Labour County Councillor? Yes, in the person of John S. Banks, expert in crofters and agricultural problems, who is the Vice-Convenor of Caithness County Council. Other Labour Coun-

cillors come from Mid Clyth, Wick and Dunbeath. Wick and Thurso have Labour Town Councillors.

Sutherland, too, is making headway in their County Council. Several Labour Councillors have been elected there.

With the spearhead of railwaymen in the east, who link the far-flung stations with the shepherds trailing over wild moorland, and winding mountain tracks, helped by the travelling grocery vanmen, the bus girls, gamekeepers and fishermen, a tenuous thread of contact has been established by the Labour Party all round the constituency.

Sold His Sheep

D. Sinclair Hay, the Labour Party's prospective Parliamentary candidate,

has earned much support within the constituency. The islanders of Stroma, the fishermen of Wick and Port Skerry, the agriculturalists of Caithness and Sutherland are sure he is the standard-bearer who can lead them to a Labour victory.

When I left Caithness and Sutherland to return to Glasgow, one of my friends said "You will be glad to get to civilisation." I wonder. Nowhere have I found such devotion to the cause of Socialism, and nowhere have I found such sacrifices made to build up Labour Party organisation.

Out of a flock of six sheep, one crofter member sold one sheep to clear a debt outstanding against his local Party.

We Quadrupled Our Membership

By JAMES BOYLE, Agent, West Lothian D.L.P.

West Lothian is now Scotland's second biggest D.L.P. In two years it has pushed its membership from 760 to over 3,000. Here is how it was done.

As secretary of a constituency which has raised its individual membership from 760 to over three thousand in two years I suppose I should start off by saying that making new members for the Labour Party is easy—but then I should only be telling a half truth.

Like many other constituencies, West Lothian was a war casualty, its membership lying prostrate so much so that returns on individual membership did not cover the cost of cards issued. Four branches were in existence, one of them active. The first job, therefore, was to establish branches. This was achieved, and twenty-seven of them were got going.

The setting up of the branches was, of course, the first and hardest part of creating a membership, and at first we contented ourselves with approaching known sympathisers, and by the end of 1945 had increased our individual membership to 1,171. Routine stuff—but routine is the life-blood of any organisation.

Women's Part

1946 saw us commence a campaign specially designed to draw women into the Party. One-day schools, rallies, picnics and special conferences of women members were held and every encouragement given to them to form women's sections.

Very soon we had seven women's sections going with a central committee of their own, organising regular quarterly conferences, canvassing amongst women for membership, raising cash and doing the jobs that only women can do well. We finished 1946 with a membership of 3,049. The stage was thus set for a mass canvass and propaganda drive.

West Lothian is a county constituency, widespread and difficult, with six burghs and many small villages, and our first step towards a mass canvass was to plan a "Tell Britain Campaign" designed to cover every burgh, village and hamlet.

The county was broken up into areas and each one notified well in advance that a special week's canvass and propaganda drive was to be held in that area. Members of Parliament and other speakers were written to and supplied with a list of name places and dates to choose from, and according to the replies, speakers were allocated from the centre to the areas.

Loudspeaker Technique

Each campaign week followed the same lines with open-air meetings, street to street talks with the loudspeaker—toned down to a minimum of volume—with invitations to the folks to come out and talk over local and

national problems. While the meetings and talks were being held, canvassers were on the doorstep distributing literature and asking people to join the party. All of the time we advertised a mass meeting to be held locally at the end of each week addressed by, usually, a Member of Parliament. Each week the gains were totalled up and each new member was sent a personal letter inviting him or her to attend the local party branch meeting.

Circuses were planned to take place during the campaign and we started off with a huge May Day Demonstration & Sports Day, costing hundreds of pounds—but we made over a hundred in profits in spite of one of the worst days that Scotland is capable of producing, and anyone who knows Scotland knows what it can do when it makes up its mind.

Up and Doing

In August we held a county-wide rally and picnic, which was attended by over three thousand, giving a further stimulus to our campaign and filling our members old and new with

that feeling of belonging to a Party that was up and doing.

By breaking the campaign up into areas we prevented the necessity of generating prolonged enthusiasm and over and above got our weekly splash in the local newspapers, thus keeping alive the interest of those areas which had already been covered and instilling a competitive spirit into the areas still to be entered. Our campaign finishes at the end of September, and with over nine hundred new members already enrolled we should top the thousand by a comfortable number.

To sum up, members are easy to get if the organisation is there to get them, and the organisation can be built up by hard work and attention to routine methods of organising. Just one further word.

Organising is not a cheap-jack job, and to get results it is essential to plan big and then go all out to get the wherewithal from whatever source it is available. Like membership, money is there for the asking; devise ways and means of asking and you will get the cash.

To The Street Corner!

By JOHN F. HILL, Assistant District Organiser, North-West Region

One hears on all sides the protest voiced that the Government, and the Party, are not keeping the people informed of their activities. It is said no one knows just what they are doing; what they hope to do, and especially of the difficulties they are meeting.

The national Press also is campaigning along these lines, even though they themselves don't and won't help the Government to keep the people informed, and, of course, the *Daily Herald* is limited in what it can do; and as too few of our own people read it, how can we expect that vast number we call the doubtfuls to do so?

How then are we to get across to the ordinary man and woman in the street the great story of Labour's work, of their very real achievements, of the difficulties faced and overcome, now before it is too late?

Make no mistake about it, no matter how good a job our comrades in Parliament may do, if the people are not aware of it, we may find ourselves in opposition again in 1950, and the great

work of building a Socialist Britain set at naught because you and I would not take the trouble to play our part in the great crusade. Our part, surely a job within the capability of all of us, is to be well-informed ourselves and then get back to the street corner.

Use Street Contacts

It was at the street corner that the early Socialists laid the foundations of our Movement, when we had no money and few supporters, before we had "national speakers," before we could even afford the modest price of renting a room for a meeting, the pioneers stood on the soap-box and held forth.

Our job is so much easier now than theirs was. We have good literature to take with us, the help of experienced councillors and party officials, and the real knowledge that our Socialist policy—having been tried and tested in war and peace—is not only workable but is undoubtedly the only policy that can insure the greatest good to the greatest number.

These street corner meetings can be done by only a few comrades, at little or no cost to the Party. Simply distribute a duplicated notice of the meeting together with a membership form to each house in the street a couple of days before the proposed meeting, and most essential, use any contacts in the street to spread the news.

Make it Lively

At the meeting itself, only four or five members are needed (it is wrong to ask the whole membership to turn out at each of these meetings—it browns them off). One to take the chair, one to take the collection and distribute the literature, the others to

speaking. The speakers really must keep it brief and make it lively.

A word to the chairman: do start the meeting at the advertised time, don't wait for a crowd collecting, in all probability there won't be any crowd, certainly not at the start of the meeting but the people will listen on the doorsteps and behind the curtains.

Our comrades in the Government are doing their job and it's a most excellent job that they are doing, and one for which we should not apologise, and we must see to it that the electorate will do their part when called upon.

You and I, therefore, must constitute ourselves Public Relations Officers and our workshop will be at the STREET CORNER.

READERS' FORUM

"Fame Is The Spur"

Don't be misled by adverse film criticism into missing "Fame Is The Spur," the new film which has just started in London. It is something new to hear the Labour Party mentioned by name on the screen, but to see the history of the Movement during the last fifty years unrolling is indeed stirring. Many poignant memories are recalled by the early electioneering, the pioneer public meetings, strikes — suppressed by mounted authority with an ever ready truncheon — the first Labour Government greeted by the film characters in our own words: "We never thought we'd live to see it," and the bitter 1931 betrayal.

Michael Redgrave plays a man whom many of us may think we recognise. And as he grows older and further away from the people who put him in his high office, it is perhaps salutary to search our own conscience. We all know the new member who wants to be a candidate, and the old member who has held office so long that he thinks his word is law. But how often do we stop to bring our own motives under the sharp light of hard thinking?

Do go and see this film and then pause and reflect a while. It will do you good and it will benefit the Movement. And don't protest indignantly to me until you have seen the film;

I think you will understand then what I mean.

MARGARET BREWER,
107, King Henry's Road,
Hampstead, N.W.3.

DON'T WASTE 'EM

Don't waste our speakers! A few Parties are requesting a Minister to attend within a fortnight of a visit by one of the Tory spokesmen. This is not propaganda. We don't want to chase behind the Tories. We have to lead—to challenge—to put forward the Government's case fearlessly as part of a co-ordinated effort.

* * *

Many Parties have made excellent use of the "Brieflets" issued by the Press and Publicity Department. Some have duplicated them as tips for canvassers at membership drives; others have reprinted them on the back of meeting leaflets, whilst many local Party journals have quoted them in full in panel format.

WANTED !

Will parties or readers who have any copies of the 1945 edition of "Conduct of Parliamentary Elections" which they can spare, kindly send them to John Pinkerton, Director of Study Courses, Head Office. Fair price will be remitted for each copy. The edition is sold out, and it is not possible to reprint at present. Extra copies are urgently needed for Study Course work.

Cultivating Voters' Goodwill

By J. W. RAISIN, Organiser, London Labour Party

The result of the West Islington by-election is satisfactory. We held the seat, and the Tory vote, so far from increasing actually declined, while the Liberal barely saved his deposit. And so, in moderation, we can rejoice.

Yet there is no room for complacency on our part. The chief point for us to remember is that our vote declined from that registered at the General Election, and it is upon this aspect of the result which I shall concentrate in an attempt to show what are the lessons from the angle of organisation, to be learned from West Islington.

First, though, I wish to counter the suggestion that the Government's vote at a by-election is naturally subject to reduction as compared with the preceding General Election, because it is the Government. I see no reason for this as a general argument, but assuming that it might be true for other parties, we ought certainly not to accept it as necessarily true for our Government.

What Causes Apathy?

This by-election theory is just a variation of the "swing-of-the-pendulum" theory. And that is itself either a form of defeatism or wishful thinking according to which side of the pendulum swing you happen to be!

No, I see no reason why we should not poll more rather than less votes at a by-election. After all, it is to be expected that our organisation in the latter case will be superior. And better organisation by our opponents may be expected to raise their own votes rather than to reduce ours.

If the foregoing suggests that our organisation in West Islington was imperfect, it would not be for me to deny it. There were numerous defects. Still, it was a very good organisation and, if that were all there were to it we ought to have polled our General Election vote, whereas we dropped 2,736 votes. Some of these no doubt went to the Liberal, but is that a consolation?

To what, then, do I ascribe the fall in our vote? To our old friend "apathy." But how has this apathy come about or, to put it rather better: what has caused this increase in apathy? I am afraid that the answer to that is: our neglect of the political education of the electors.

Regular Propaganda Needed

It is all too often forgotten that the result of the General Election of 1945 was not just a change in the government, it was the beginning of the social revolution! Britain is now committed to a tremendous change in her way of life and all its people are deeply involved. It is true that electors in some constituencies have "opted" for this way of life long prior to 1945, but until lately none have had personal experience of living through the inevitable difficulties of the transitional period. It is a tribute to the tenacity of their purpose, rather than to their understanding of current events, that

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so few can be deflected from their adherence to the Labour Party.

We are not yet—by a long way—matching up to our responsibilities as a party in the leadership of the people towards full social democracy. The difficulties are enormous. Paper is scarce and halls for meetings are hard to come by while everybody seems to be terribly busy. But the “difficulties” of to-day are small compared with the obstacles confronting the early workers of the Party and there are enormous and obvious advantages at the present time.

It is, of course, imperative that the material issued at a by-election is of the best — and we may fairly claim that our literature and posters at West Islington reached a high standard of quality and punch—but unless there has been propaganda work of this character in the preceding months, the election literature suffers in two ways.

First, from the reaction of many of the recipients in the thought that it is only at election time that they hear from the Labour Party; second, that so much of the literature has to be devoted to the awakening of the electorate to the mere fact of the election, the actual content of the message is sadly diminished.

Loudspeaker Trouble

In a summer campaign the open-air meeting (with loudspeaker) is an obvious form of propaganda and a big effort with many excellent speakers was carried through. It was clear, though, that the first week's effort was mainly useful in creating audiences because the electors had not been used to this type of party activity. Then, too, a good deal of wasteful experimentation with regard to sites had to be undertaken because the necessary local knowledge did not exist.

And, touching on loudspeakers, surely we are not using these instruments very intelligently. A shouting match between opposing parties is not very edifying; but it is also largely ineffective. The trouble is that very few people have trained themselves in loudspeaker technique — and that is because the opportunities have not been provided them. I have long hoped to see an adaptation of the “conversation-piece” to political propaganda — and this would be most effective in explain-

ing complicated economic matters — but it is hopeless to try to improvise such activity in the hurly-burly of a by-election. The need is for regular weekly gatherings at well-established sites where the new type of “loud-speaker-speaker” can learn his trade.

Must Cultivate Goodwill

I hope I have said enough to show what to my mind is the chief cause of a reduced vote at by-elections, viz., the absence of *sustained* propaganda and other party activity. Mobilising a full-scale by-election campaign from “cold” makes a terrific drain on the resources both of finance and personnel available to the Election Agent and is, in any case, far less effective than an extension of normal activity would be.

There is another and very important aspect of this matter. I mean that of good relations between the local comrades and the “outsiders.” Where well-established units of organisation exist these can be geared quite naturally to the by-election organisation, and with a minimum of friction. Where few (and weak) units exist they must be created and people found (generally from other constituencies) who can be trusted to run them efficiently. This

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always rouses feeling among local comrades who think they are being deliberately put aside and are indignant. Only the exercise of excellent local spirit and a great deal of tact on the part of the Election Agent avoided at West Islington more than one serious hitch in the programme in matters over which no dispute could have occurred had adequate units of organisation existed prior to the election.

But "units of organisation"—which means small teams of workers for the different districts—cannot really exist unless they have something practical to do. So we are back at the same point again: that election work is, or should be, the extension and intensification of normal activity carried on, month by month, in every part of the constituency or locality.

Recent by-elections in London for Parliament, L.C.C. and Borough Coun-

cils all point in the same direction. A great field of goodwill among the electorate is at our disposal *if we will cultivate it*. We have, however, no prescriptive rights to the votes of working-class electors, and there are indications that some of this vote may be transferred to other parties unless we show by constant instead of spasmodic efforts, that we value their support.

Now reader: this article is mainly about a by-election in one London constituency and you may think it is not overmuch your concern. But when may you not have to engage in a Parliamentary by-election? and is the organisation with which you are associated actually working? Not just ready for action, but functioning now!

If it isn't it will contribute to a decline in the Labour vote at the next election whether it is a "By" or the General Election itself.

Duplicating for D.L.Ps.

By BETTY OTSU

Miss Otsu is on the office staff of the Yorkshire Regional Council at Leeds. Here she gives some tips on a subject which can cause much trouble and worry to local party officers.

An efficiently organised Labour Party, with its decentralisation of work through the appointment of membership, social, propaganda and educational officers, requires some co-ordination.

The Executive and General committees, if they are to do their work efficiently, should be supplied with written reports of the activities of the various sub-committees. Duplication is the easiest way to accomplish this, as many parties have realised, so that a duplicator is now a necessary part of the office equipment.

Many of our local party secretaries have not had training in the art of duplicating and it may that a few comments on the "do's and don't's" would not be amiss.

Duplicating, or the process of making more than one copy of a document from a single typing, can be done by many methods, but the one most commonly used is the stencil process. This can be done on two different types of machine, the rotary and the flat. The

exact method, however, is the same in essentials, the difference being in the method of "running off" the copies, and the speed.

The Secret of Success

The process consists of typing the matter to be copied on a sheet of stencil paper underneath which is placed a carbon paper to collect the surplus wax cut away, and at the back of which is attached a tough backing sheet to take the blow of the type. The stencil is then placed in the frame of the duplicator and by running a sheet of duplicating paper under the stencil and an inked roller under pressure over the top, an exact copy is produced.

The variety of Labour Party work provides plenty of scope for illustrating how effective and attractive duplicating can be. This cannot be done, however, if we think of it only in terms of expediency—the quickest method of getting the job out of the way—as the secret of good duplicating lies in how

much time and patience we devote to the job from the beginning to the end.

Inserting the Stencil

Stencil paper is necessarily extremely delicate and easily cracks, so that care must be taken when inserting the stencil into the typewriter, making sure that it is perfectly horizontal. The ribbon of the machine is, of course, switched off when cutting the stencil, otherwise the cutting power of the type, which should be scrupulously clean, is considerably reduced. It is wise, if clear copies are to be produced, to type slower than usual, using an even but staccato touch.

A large proportion of duplicating for local parties, such as agendas, programmes, syllabuses and so on, requires displaying, and it is desirable to plan out the setting of the page before starting to type. If this preliminary planning is not done it is impossible to arrange the matter without several false starts, and waste of time, effort and money, as stencils are costly articles.

The most effective display work is simple, neat and orderly, pleasing to the eye yet easily read. The chief features, apart from the centring of headings, are underscoring, tabular arrangement and decorative borders. For the latter the combination of such characters as the hyphen, colon and cipher is attractive.

To centre a heading accurately a guess will not do. The number of letters and spaces must be counted and halved. For example, if we centre the words "Special Conference," the number of letters and spaces is eighteen, so we would commence typing nine spaces from the centre of the stencil, which is usually marked. In the case of tabular work it is helpful to know the typing width of the paper. A

quarto sheet of paper, on a standard typewriter, takes eighty letter spaces, so that if the longest line in each column is calculated, together with the number of spaces between each column, the difference of that total and eighty will be the number of spaces available for the margins.

"Running-off" Copies

This ensures complete accuracy in the shortest space of time, and we will know immediately whether or not the whole of the columns can be accommodated within the width of a quarto or foolscap sheet of paper.

Uniformity is the keynote for the duplication of neat letters or any other straightforward typing. Paragraphing, and let it be adequate, should start at the same point and the margins on either side should be as even as possible.

"Running-off" the copies is last, but by no means least important, as the absence of care in fixing the stencil to the duplicator and the adjustment of the paper, can make or mar the job. If the duplicator is inked, and this should always be used sparingly, before fixing the stencil, a lot of trouble will be avoided, such as the formation of cracks and wrinkles, which will result in "dirty" copies.

In these days we frequently use both sides of the paper. The heavyweight duplicating paper is, of course, the best for this, but most important is that sufficient time is allowed for the first copies to dry. This reminds me to mention coloured duplicating paper, which is not only attractive but is helpful when sending out two, or more, circulars together.

If the finished product is an example of clean and efficient duplicating the recipient of a circular will be more inclined to read it and that, surely, is our aim and an adequate reward.

Appoint a Fellowship Officer

By S. FARMER, Fellowship Officer, West Fulham L.P.

How far has it been realised that the workers of this country are now receiving considerably more leisure time than at any other period in their working lives? This is due in main to the reduction of working hours and the introduction of the five-day week.

We in the Labour movement should now, therefore, be thinking of how best to organise the enjoyment of this leisure, and so continue the spirit of fellowship existing in our movement.

In the past the bringing together of party members during their restricted

leisure time for recreation was usually by means of a social evening or dance organised by a social secretary or committee.

Now this is insufficient and other avenues have to be pursued as a means of keeping together in comradeship the ever-increasing membership of go-ahead divisional parties whose members' individual tastes are wide and varied.

How It Works

Therefore, in order to embrace our new functions the old label of social secretary seems inadequate and in its place we have substituted fellowship officer. This immediately gives a picture of something with unlimited scope, but always directed towards keeping that spirit of fellowship uppermost. To promote this idea of fellowship throughout the party and to bring into active participation all those members who have a flair for such work we have made the following appointments:—

- (a) *Party Fellowship Officer.*
- (b) *Ward Fellowship Officers.*
- (c) *Party Fellowship Committee.*
- (d) *Ward Fellowship Committees.*

The Party Officer is elected by the G.M.C. to explore all avenues of fellowship and to bring to the Party Committee suggestions and lines upon which to develop and also co-ordinate actions taken thereon.

Each Ward elects its own Fellowship Officer who, with the Party Officer, comprises the party committee. This enables all suggestions, etc., to be brought to the notice of the Wards and to be discussed and acted upon by the Ward Committees who are elected by the Wards. The size of the Ward Committees are not limited as all members who are interested are welcomed and this is indeed necessary when we begin to consider all those fields in which our endeavours can be applied.

Now let us tabulate some of the forms in which our efforts can be directed:—

- (1) *Social functions, Social evenings, Dances, Whist Drives, Reunions, Theatre Parties, Conducted Tours, etc.*
- (2) *Indoor Sports, Darts, Billiards and Snooker, Table Tennis, Chess and Draughts, Dominoes, Cribbage.*
- (3) *Outdoor Sports, Football, Cricket, Bowls, Tennis, Swimming, Cycling.*

- (4) *Miscellaneous, Drama Group, Choir, Rambling, Camping.*

Whilst not attempting to suggest that each party has facilities for indulging in all of the above, it can be truthfully said that a considerable part can be immediately brought into active being.

For Trade Unionists, Too

After the elections in 1945 we in West Fulham began looking around for new premises and managed to purchase a large corner site. Whilst our immediate aim was to secure premises from which to carry out the party business and expansion and also provide suitable accommodation for ward meetings, we remembered the needs of the local trade union branches, and whilst not yet fully developed, are providing more pleasant surroundings for our colleagues to meet than they were enjoying.

In a short time we hope that our premises will become the centre of Specialist activity in West London, and with this in mind our original plans made provision for part of the premises to be used solely for recreational purposes which would be available for not only party members but all users of our premises and so promote the spirit of fellowship.

We have obtained a catering licence and are able to provide light refreshments for all those attending meetings, etc., on the premises, and our trade union colleagues are grateful for these facilities, as in some cases their members arrive direct from work and are able to obtain a meal and carry on with the branch business.

Each Ward at present is holding regular social evenings and dances and the party is doing likewise. Among our immediate plans is the formation of a darts league from all the wards, with no limit to the number of teams. When this is running successfully we shall bring our trade union branches into a similar competition, and then this should increase like a snowball with our field of competitors extending to other divisional parties.

We are affiliated to the Workers' Sports Association, and by using the facilities here available the growth of sports activities throughout the movement are unlimited.

Are you developing on the same lines? If so, let me know and maybe we can arrange to meet for an evening's fellowship.

Meetings Clashing? Here's a Plan

By H. W. BELLAMY, Secretary and Agent, West Lewisham D.L.P.

I am settling down to the problem of arranging next year's meetings. If your problems are similar to mine you might find my method of approach useful.

We are part of a divided Borough with a Central Party and Trades Council; which is an organisational set-up similar to that of a D.L.P. in a County Division. We have control of the Borough Council, we won the Parliamentary seat in 1945 with a good but not overwhelming majority, and, therefore, must maintain a continuous propaganda with plenty of meetings.

We are a Party of seven Wards and have Women's Sections and a Branch of the League of Youth. These latter meet weekly; all others meet regularly each month for a business and an executive meeting. To complete the picture there are the usual conferences and a live local Co-operative movement demanding time.

My own problem is complicated by the need to arrange lettings for the two meeting rooms at our Headquarters during the times they are not in use for the Party.

Prepare a Chart

Here's how I tackle the job. A calendar chart is prepared for the year, the back of a quad crown poster (40 inches by 30 inches) is admirable for the purpose. Rule it into 12 sections down for the months and 37 sections across for the days. Next put your month and days headings in, in respect of the days, starting with Thursday for 1948 (other years will have a different starting point). Now enter the dates, remember January 1 is a Thursday, February 1 is a Sunday and you enter the dates under the appropriate day.

When the sheet is completely ruled for months, days and dated, you have before you the tool for an at-a-glance what's-on-everywhere chart.

It's best to start by entering the Borough Council Committees and meetings, you can get the list from one of your Councillors. It's good to dodge these dates if you can, then your Councillors have no reason for not taking full part in the work of the Party and they should be available when reports are needed.

Then list the fixed dates. We attempt so far as is possible to operate the principle of a fixed day of the week in a fixed week of the month, for all committees, this cannot always be done because of the difficulty of finding meeting places, but it's surprising how, when one is set a task, one surmounts the difficulties.

However, don't meet your troubles until they come, start by entering your main Committees, allowing at least a week between Executive and Committee meetings, the rest can be entered in turn, variations being made as the problems present themselves.

You will, of course, then have to get the list accepted, by the Management committee and it is therefore wise to circulate it to all delegates and secretaries about a month before you want it adopted.

It's Worth It

All this sounds a deal of work—it is a deal of work, my chart takes 10 hours to compile, but believe me, it saves many more hours the following year. One doesn't get the feeling that our time is spent at meetings which serve no purpose except to ratify decisions already made and to provide material for the next meeting.

Finally, I make myself a neat copy of the completed chart on cardboard; the draft is by now a very messy-looking affair; for hanging in the office, and circulate the agreed dates to all delegates and secretaries, telling myself "that's a good job done, but thank goodness it's a year before we do it again."

Soldier's Left Turn

ON reaching the penultimate profile in this series I was engaging in a little retrospective contemplation of its predecessors when I noticed that only one of my subjects is a Londoner born. The exception is Dick Windle who is, so far as I can see, the only cockney on the Party's organising staff.

Mildly surprised at this, for the ubiquitous cockney, like the ditto Scot, turns up everywhere. I thought that Jim Raisin, London rganiser, would help to restore the capital's balance, but not he!

For Jim is a Kipling subject if ever there was one. A son of Empire, born within sight and sound of the barrack square in Bombay, India. One of his ancestors was killed at the battle of Waterloo; his maternal grandfather was one of the Six Hundred in the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava; his father was in the siege of Ladysmith and Jim himself was reared in the barracks and went to an Army school.

It would cause no surprise to learn that he cut his teeth on a cartridge case and had his feeding times regulated by bugle call.

Woolwich to Hackney

It is recorded in well-documented folk lore that old soldiers, in defiance of normal biological practice, never die. Careful research into their ultimate post-military destination discloses that, in the main, they join the staff of Woolwich Arsenal, and Jim's father was no exception. This brought young Jim to Woolwich and under the influence of William Barefoot and Charlie New and he joined the Woolwich Labour Party, strictly against the rules, just before his sixteenth birthday.

For ten years he worked in that successful Party. His first job was Committee Room Clerk in a district Committee Room in the Borough Council elections of 1922, a task which he conducted so well that he was promoted in the 1923 and 1924 General Elections to Central Committee Room Clerk in the centre which was H.Q. for both the Woolwich divisions. The following year he became full-time collector and membership canvasser to Woolwich Labour Party and it was during the period he held down that

job that Woolwich became the top of the League Party in our membership records. I make no crack about cause and effect. I merely record the fact.

In 1929 South Hackney advertised for an Agent and Jim was elected. If my justly famous memory for such details is still delivering the goods, I believe there was considerable competition for the job. There was some doubt about appointing a mere youth of 25 with only about 10 years' experience of organising. Such an applicant to-day would seem like an appointing Party's dream. It makes you think!

Four years later Jim transferred to East Lewisham and stayed there for over 12 years, setting himself the job of building a first class Party on what was regarded then as extremely unlikely and unsuitable ground. But an L.L.C. victory in 1934 gave him the conviction that this was the type of division which could produce the most steady and reliable membership once it was organised, and his dogged adherence to that belief was justified by the results.

Direct and Straightforward

His Candidate in South Hackney was Herbert Morrison. His Candidate at the last election at East Lewisham was Herbert Morrison. Again I make no cracks about cause and effect. Again, I merely record the fact.

Soon after war broke out Jim became a Temporary Civil Servant, first in the M.O.I., in which he was a regional officer, and later in the Ministry of Supply as Regional Works Relations Officer for the North Midlands region. Rumours and signs of the approaching election brought him back to East Lewisham as early as March, 1945, when he took over his old job and found things in excellent shape, due to the fact that his wife, Mabel Raisin, had seen to it that, bombs or doodlebugs or V 2s notwithstanding, things had stayed that way.

Just over a year ago, in November, 1946, he was appointed London Organiser to follow Hinley Atkinson.

Oddly enough, until that appointment, our paths had crossed only once, although he and I have been in the organising service of the Party for exactly the same number of years—

since 1924. It was in the early 'thirties, at a London District meeting of the Agents' Union which, by some mischance, I was attending. Things were tough during that period and we were inclined to bemoan the difficulties of running machines geared for many workers when only a few were forthcoming.

I recall that Jim, making what was I think his maiden speech at a Union meeting, roundly set about the moaners, urging the re-gearing of the

machines to suit available workers—a piece of straightforward logic, which, I fear, seemed too naïve to hard-boiled, case-hardened Agents inured to the hard way.

But he was right. As you see, I had not forgotten his speech fifteen years after he made it. I see ample sign that he still has that directness of mind and briskness of approach to a problem which is a refreshing thing in itself and which will be a great asset to his Party.

ELECTION QUERY

Conveying Electors to the Poll

Query: Is it legal for a supporter of the Party to hire a private car and loan it to the Party free of charge for the purpose of conveying electors to and from the poll?

Answer: *No, it is definitely illegal.* No payment or contract of payment shall, for the purpose of promoting or procuring the election of a candidate at any election, be made on account of the conveyance of electors to or from the poll, whether for the hiring of horses or carriages, or for railway fares, or otherwise. Sec. 7. C.I.P.P.A., 1883.

The loan of all vehicles for conveying electors to the poll must be lent

gratuitously and all costs for drivers, petrol, etc., must be paid by the owners or lenders. The lending must be really bona fide.

It is illegal to use or to borrow any public stage or hackney carriage or any vehicle which is normally let out for hire for the purpose of conveying electors to the poll. Sec. 14 C.I.P.P.A.

A person may hire a taxi or car to take himself to the poll and pay the cost, but if several people use the vehicle at one time the cost of the hire must be borne jointly by all the persons undertaking the journey. Sec. 14 (3) C.I.P.P.A.

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Progress on Salary Scales

By L. H. M. HILLIARD

General Secretary, National Union of Labour Agents and Organisers

An interesting sign of increasing Party activity is the considerable influx of members to the union resulting from recent new appointments. This is in line with the development plans foreshadowed at Annual Conference and the Union welcomes its new recruits.

The Executive Committee hopes that these new appointments will be consolidated but anticipates difficulties will arise unless an early amendment to the existing grants-in-aid scheme is made. Such a proposition is under review, as is the more speedy payment of grants and this latter point will be of some concern to our membership.

At the moment the whole subject of agency service is under consideration both by the National Executive Committee and the Union and I hope soon to be able to send a news-letter to all members advising them of the stage we have reached with the negotiations in connection with the Agents' Charter proposals. *Substantial progress has been made in relation to salary scales, and I think members will consider the suggestions to be made to them as being satisfactory.*

Pressure of By-Elections

The recent spate of Parliamentary by-elections has meant additional responsibilities for many of our members who have, and are, giving time to the campaigns. The limited number of experienced agents available, able to secure their release from constituency duties, necessarily means that a heavy burden falls quite frequently upon the same shoulders, and the more solidly entrenched parties, mainly requested to release agents, are carrying more than their share of the sacrifices demanded by the Party's needs.

All this, of course, points the need for a substantial increase in agency service, a fact readily appreciated and desired by the National Executive Committee. At the same time the feeling grows within the Union that there is a need for a more positive approach to the matter of agency recruitment. Some form of training, both theoretical and practical, is considered desirable, and a channel provided through which those willing to serve the Movement in this way and having organising ability can be provided with the opportunity they seek.

Some interesting discussion on these and associated points has recently been going on in the London district, and there is a possibility that the conclusions reached may be put into the form of a memorandum and circulated to other branches for general discussion.

School for Agents

In the last issue of the "Labour Organiser" I mentioned London District's intention to hold a series of schools for its members on problems arising from agency service. I now learn from "Vic" Butler, the new district secretary, that plans have been made for schools in December and January.

The first will be held on December 13th at the West Fulham Labour Party's premises, Fulham Road, with a morning and afternoon session. An excellent team of tutors has been arranged. Harold Croft deals with legal problems at the first session with "Dai" Cousins, the district chairman, presiding, and "Bill" Jacobs, in the second session tackles "Human problems of agency work." The district vice-chairman, will be in the chair.

I understand details are to be circulated to members and that the district secretary will be glad to learn the names of members anxious to attend. Lunch and tea is to be provided and I believe that the district would welcome members from other districts who might be able, and willing, to attend.

Let's Try Specialist Meetings

By M. L. BURNET, Hampstead L.P.

Up and down the country political parties of all colours have been holding political meetings that have been failures from the point of view of attendance. All sorts of attention have been devoted to getting the matter put right through better publicity, better speakers, more attractive poster layout, and what not, without any appreciable effect on results.

When a failure is constantly repeated it is worth querying the nature of the undertaking itself rather than to continue re-examining the means. Perhaps there is something wrong with the notion of meetings.

That is not to say that meetings cannot still be held with outstanding national figures; there is always curiosity to see a public figure in the flesh whose name is constantly mentioned in press and radio and one who is considered responsible for shaping major national policies.

But the local pontificator's day is done, also the minor Minister's or Member of Parliament. Catch meetings on acute issues, particularly on issues with local significance, can be successful still, and there will always be a good deal of interest in a parliamentary general election, advantage of which can be taken locally.

When Meetings Flop

The fact is that most people know well enough what the parties stand for, but at election times modifications are introduced in policies in order to win votes and electors are interested to see what these modifications will be. This interest produces a readiness to attend

meetings for this purpose and to learn the reactions of others to them.

Some objective criteria should be adopted in assessing the effectiveness of propaganda meetings. A computation should be made of the attendances at meetings compared with the electorate of the area served by them. Should this give a figure over a series of meetings of one per cent. or under, as it undoubtedly does in many constituencies, it can be said that the meetings are not serving the aim of general propaganda and it will then be open to the party to consider what aim should be held in mind in connection with the organisation of meetings.

Abandonment of the notion of general propaganda gives freedom for the holding of specialist meetings or meetings for specialists. The subjects of meetings may be functionally determined, subjects being selected for appeal to school teachers, nurses, boarding-house keepers, etc., or for some special end, with a view to obtaining members, or members with a particular interest.

It is important that all party work should be undertaken with deliberation and calculation. Every penny spent and every hour, whether paid or volunteered, expended should be measured against results achieved. It is no good saying that a meeting should have been attended because the speaker was good and the subject an interesting one. The fact that it did not interest anyone and that the hall was empty is sufficient contradiction of such a statement.

There is no statutory compulsion to attend political meetings and, as it has been said, you cannot indict a nation, so it is no good moralising about the apathy and wickedness of the people. A meeting that is not attended is not a meeting, and is as worthless and wasteful as throwing food in the dustbin.



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